University Health Council Meeting Minutes
Friday, March 1st, 2024- via Zoom
Meeting called to order by Chair Ellen Lutz

Present:
Ellen Lutz (Chair, Libraries), George Corey (UHS), Jeff Hescock (EHS), Mike Pease (SPP), Sheila Pennell (Nursing), Eitan Perry (SGA), Pamela Shea (ESL), Joe Van Allen (CDPS), Andrew McMahon (UHS), Marco Ulysse (SGA), Wilmore Webley (Microbiology), Lauren Collier (Disability Services, Guest), Zoe Kopec (Disability Services, Guest)

1) Introduction of Health Council members

2) Meeting Minutes from 2/02/2024
-*Minutes Approved*

3) Disability Services
Presentation by Lauren Collier and Zoe Kopec of Disability Services. UMass follows the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in their definition of a disabled person: "a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities".

In order to be eligible for accommodation services, there needs to be evidence of disruption of one or more major life activities. Not every diagnosis will rise to that level.

Disability Services is charged with ensuring equal access, which is done by providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations, as well as referring students to other relevant campus resources, such as CCPH, the Learning Resource Center, and the Writing Center. Their goal is to provide equal access and remove barriers.

Accommodations are intended to provide a level playing field, give students an equal chance to do the same work as their peers, empower students with disabilities, and minimalize the functional limitations of a disability on a given task. Accommodations do not apply retroactively, give an unfair advantage over other students, make exceptions to the fundamental requirements or expectations of a course, or guarantee that the student will make progress or demonstrate success.

Some common examples of accommodations are extra time on exams, reduced distraction test-taking, scribe for exams, Glean for notetaking, a peer note-taker, physical access in the classroom, accessible furniture, document conversion, Realtime captioning, ASL translation, disability-related absences or assignment extensions, and housing accommodations, among other things.

In order for a student to be given accommodations, they meet with an Access Coordinator, who takes their verbal report and reviews their documentation. The Access Coordinator then decides if the student qualifies and what reasonable accommodations can be provided.

It is appropriate to refer a student to DS if they mention that they have a disability or diagnosis, have a history of accommodations, suspect that they have a disability, or are encountering challenges related to mental health. DS does not provide diagnostic testing but will direct students to the Center for Counseling and Psychological Health (CCPH) for those services instead.

Questions:

Joe asked if students were notified of the process or if they get reminders at the beginning of the semester. There are efforts made during New Student Orientation and Destination Days to get the word out about DS. Returning students with accommodations are sent an email reminder at the start of every semester.

Pamela asked if DS had any information or resources for international students. There's no partnership with any international student's offices, but DS considers culture and beliefs about disability when meeting with students for the first time.

George asked if there was any data on the success rate of professors honoring accommodations when UHS issues a note to instructors about a temporary disability, such as a concussion. DS does offer accommodations for students with temporary disabilities, so physicians should encourage the students to reach out to DS, and include in their notes how long the disability may be present for and how it will affect the student to guarantee that they receive appropriate accommodations.

George asked if there was any information on professors who have zero-leniency absence policies. DS discourages zero-leniency absence policies, and encourages faculty to have a disability statement in their syllabi and an attendance policy that has some degree of leniency.

Ellen asked if there is any incentive or compensation for student note-takers, and what happens if no one volunteers? Peer note-takers can elect to receive either 45 hours of community service or one academic credit per course that they take notes in. They can only receive the academic credit up to three times, but the community service hours are not restricted. If no volunteer is found, DS will follow up with faculty to see what they can provide for the student in that process, such as if there is a TA who can take notes or if there is Glean access. If there are no other options, a classroom access assistant may be sent to the class.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:55 PM.
Minutes prepared by Caitlyn Foster (Faculty Senate Project Assistant)